



Some would say life just happens. It is true we have no say regarding who our biological parents are, what our country of birth will be, nor any of the multitudes of other factors that surround us at our conception. But I assure you; it is not by chance that we are here at this time in history.

As we absorb the miracle of creation and the artistry of God in all of nature we also begin to realize that conception is purposed and each life is hugely important in God's eyes and in His plan. All of life is a journey of spiritual significance. No one should realize this more completely than the mother of a child.

I confess it has only been in recent years that the full impact of the importance of daily happenings was made clear to me. As God began to bring to my recollection, select snatches from my childhood, the collective memories combined to recreate a visual roadmap of my life. God didn't flood me with information all at one time, but in snippets here and there in odd moments when a smell or a conversation or an old photograph would prompt the recall. I began to journal the recollections.

### **SuDawn Peters**

Over time I saw ever-so-slowly how many unimposing events had turned into stories with lessons of great spiritual significance. Unbeknownst to me, what I thought of as the trivia of my own childhood had revealed a call and a purpose that had motivated me through all of life.

I believe that a black babydoll given to me by distant relatives a Christmas many years ago was just one tiny seed planted in my childlike heart. Though I doubt any in my family would remember the conversations spoken while I opened that package, God brought it to my mind four decades later. The pricking of my heart as my Caucasian family discussed my black babydoll was a forerunner to the multitude of conversations I would experience when as an adult I would mother many children of color. It was a toy, but God used it as a seed that became a revealing part in His purpose and plan for my life.

That memory has forever changed my responses to my children. I still fail to be all I aspire to be, but I never take for granted the moments of childhood and the spiritual importance any given moment may be in life.

I am now totally convinced that in the purity of a child's heart he knows the plans God has. It would do us well as parents to become increasingly sensitive to the natural bends and passions of our children. We should be aware that play is preparation for life. While observing our children as they practice what comes naturally to them, we may well see the plan God has for their lives. Then we can fully nurture and encourage them to be all that they are meant to be. We would do well to not impose upon them our ideas and plans, but to accept with empathy that which God has for them. We must guide and direct them even if it is not the vision we in our humanness might inadvertently impress upon them.

As I would dress not less than a dozen plastic babydolls for bed each night driving my poor mother to distraction as she waited to tuck me into bed, I doubt she considered I was practicing for the days when I would be helping a number of real babies prepare for bed each night. And, the memory of dusting baby powder on the bottoms of my plastic dolls has brought many a whimsical smile to my face as I have found myself powdering the delicate bottoms of my sweet, sweet babies.

How could I have known that non-stop for more than 31 years we would have someone in diapers in our home! Combining plastic babies and real-life babies together I have changed diapers in one fashion or another since I could toddle around myself! Remember, playing is just a dress rehearsal for what a child is destined to become.

Grandparents who faithfully sponsored a child in a far away land with their monthly donation and intercessory prayers would plant a curiosity for Asian children that only

God could have done. The attraction to those beautiful almond eyes or the many hues of skin color prompts a fluttering of my heart in a passionate and rescuing sort of way that I feel helpless to explain even forty years later.

Traveling to the Philippines rather than receiving military orders for Viet Nam was another huge stop in this journey of God's design. Our first adoption would happen there and forever change the path of many lives.

When we could not conceive and I grieved beyond description, I had no clue God would fill my aching arms, bring my husband into an uncanny ability to accept the children God planted in my heart, and turn my worst pain into my greatest gain for the kingdom of God.

As I read my Bible and sought God over the years I would scratch notes in the margins or date specific verses which seemed to be significant at the time. Even though some of those Bibles have been retired because of wear and tear I cherish those marks. In times of stress I thumb through those worn pages and review the map-like mile markers on this journey of life. Faded dates and one-line notes flood my heart with memories and recall lessons learned during both the valleys and the mountaintops of life. I am reassured once again of the constancy of God in my life, even when I have taken a detour on the journey. Some scriptures have proven prophetic, others instructional, still others I puzzle over and wonder yet at what God is trying patiently to teach. Life once again becomes fascinating and purposeful. He works in and through my spirit in secret ways and I can once again persevere.

In the early years adoption was a passion that fueled our search for the children God intended to bring into our family. Soon after the arrival of a child I would enjoy the satisfaction

that comes only when we have been obedient and found what God has for us. The 'high' that comes from spiritual fulfillment is something we all long to have plenty of. Too soon I would once again feel a longing in my heart that if left unattended would overpower my ability to enjoy that which was before me to nurture and care for. I understand now that it was not so much a lack of peace wrought from straying from God's presence, but a passion to continue toward that which God purposed. Even in seasons when physical care of my family consumed me and fatigue was a constant companion I would still have a longing for those children not yet home.

Without passion I would have become complacent and not willingly ventured out of my comfort zone to continue on my journey. The daily tasks necessary to meet the physical needs of those dependent upon us are not for the faint of heart. I could not nor would not have jumped at the chance to remain in those trenches of childcare had God not gone ahead of me. Sometimes it seemed He used a flashlight, sometimes headlights, sometimes a floodlight illuminating the path encouraging me to seek after His will. When the light would fade and the road become less defined it was then that I had to rely on those faded notes in the margin of my Bible, or the recollection of the memories I just shared. Those became spiritual confirmation that progress was being made, giving needed encouragement to go on.



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Even in midlife the passion surrounding adoption remains. It is the fuel for my journey, the imbedded purpose given by God. I am more patient now than I was in those early years of motherhood. It is a patience wrought of necessity and in a more practical sense, comes from waning physical endurance as we have lived in the trenches. Patience and endurance are just two of the benefits of living a fulfilled and blessed life.

In this season of my journey I occasionally find myself second-guessing our decision to bring home so many children. Second guessing that is, until I get my eyes off of the physical work and recall the spiritual memories of the trip. It is there, in the quiet places of my heart, that I find God and know that I can continue to follow the light. All of life is a spiritual journey. The physical happenings are secondary to that which God desires for us. If I move in obedience I will arrive one day at my destination. Though, for now, I travel on.